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**Part 1 - GENERAL INFORMATION****AA-100 Scope.**

This appendix establishes policy, assigns responsibilities and prescribes implementing procedures for soliciting and evaluating offeror's proposals for major acquisitions conducted by Air Force contracting activities. This appendix implements Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 15.6, Source Selection, and fulfills the responsibilities of the Air Force agency head for source selection contained in FAR 15.604(a) and 15.612(b).

**AA-101 Applicability.**

a. This appendix applies to the following competitive negotiated procurements:

(1) Within Major Programs, to:

(A) Production contract actions estimated at \$500 million or more; and

(B) Research, Development, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) contract actions estimated at \$300 million or more.

(2) Selected Program contract actions estimated at \$500 million or more.

(3) Other Program contract actions estimated at \$500 million or more.

(4) Communications and Computer acquisition contract actions that are not integral to a weapon system and are designated as a Major Automated Information System (MAIS) or any Communications and Computer contract actions estimated at \$100 million or more.

(5) Other Contracting contract actions estimated at \$500 million or more.

**NOTE:**

(1) Dollar amounts represent the estimated value of the Source Selection for the instant acquisition. (The dollar values are total values. See 5301.9006-4.)

(2) Whenever the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition) (ASAF(A)) is the Source Selection Authority (SSA), the procedures of this appendix shall be followed.

(3) These procedures may be used for acquisitions below the stated dollar thresholds at the SSA's discretion.

b. Lower level procedures implementing this appendix are authorized. Program Executive Officers will also adhere to Major Command supplements to this appendix.

**AA-102 Objective of the Major Source Selection Process.**

The objective of the major source selection process is to select the source whose proposal has the highest degree of credibility and whose performance can be expected to best meet the government's requirements at an affordable cost. The process must provide an impartial, equitable, and comprehensive evaluation of the competitors' proposals and related capabilities. The process should be accomplished with minimum complexity and maximum efficiency and effectiveness. It should be structured to balance technical, financial, and economic or business considerations consistent with the phase of the acquisition, program requirements, and business and legal constraints. It must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the objectives of the acquisition and the source selection decision must be compatible with program requirements, risks, and conditions.

**AA-103 Terms Explained.**

a. Acquisition Plan (AP). A comprehensive plan for fulfilling agency needs in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost. The acquisition plan contains the overall strategy for managing the acquisition. (See FAR Part 7 and supplements.)

b. Acquisition Strategy Panel (ASP). A group of functional experts who serve in an advisory capacity by reviewing and recommending acquisition strategies for a specific product or service.

c. Advisors. Government or non-government personnel, designated by the SSA or the chairperson of the Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC), who provide advice to the SSA, SSAC, or Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB).

d. Assessment Criteria. Evaluation criteria which are used by evaluators in performing the technical evaluation by relating certain aspects of an offeror's proposal to specific evaluation criteria.

e. Best and Final Offer (BAFO). A final proposal submission by all offerors in the competitive range submitted at a common cut-off date at the request of the Contracting Officer after conclusion of discussions. (See FAR 15.611 and supplements.)

f. Best Value. Most advantageous offer, price and other

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factors considered. Provides the best mix of utility, technical quality, business aspects, risks, and price for a given application.

g. Contract Definitization Team. A group of government personnel within the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB) who are responsible for negotiating the contracts.

h. Deficiency. For the purposes of source selection actions, a “deficiency” is defined as any part of an offeror’s proposal which, when compared to a pertinent standard, fails to meet the government’s minimum level of compliance.

i. Evaluation Criteria. The basis for measuring each offerors’ ability, as expressed in its proposal, to meet the government’s needs as stated in the solicitation. Evaluation criteria include cost (price) criterion, specific criteria, and assessment criteria. These criteria should include those things considered important to the customer about the given program, such as, reliability, maintainability, availability, environmental considerations, and technical adequacy.

j. Evaluation Standards. A standard establishes a uniform baseline against which an offeror’s solution is compared to determine its value to the government.

k. General Consideration. Element of evaluation in the source selection that typically relates to proposed contractual terms and conditions, results of preaward surveys, and other surveys or reviews. General considerations, combined with use of the evaluation criteria, provide an integrated assessment that forms the basis for award. General considerations shall be ranked. Past performance shall not be used as a general consideration if past performance is assessed as performance risk. Section M of the solicitation shall clearly state how general considerations will be integrated into the evaluation of offeror’s proposals.

l. Minimum Requirement. The lowest threshold acceptable in performance and capability. Minimum requirements shall be included in the solicitation and evaluated.

m. Performance Risk. The assessment of an offeror’s present and past work record to assess confidence in the offeror’s ability to successfully perform as proposed.

n. Performance Risk Assessment Group (PRAG). A group of experienced government personnel that may be appointed by the SSAC to assess performance risk.

o. Proposal Risk. The identification and assessment of

the risks associated with an offeror’s proposed approach as it relates to accomplishing the requirements of the solicitation.

p. Solicitation Review Board. A group of highly qualified government officials that review the Draft Requests for Proposals (DRFP) (if used), the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and other documentation for selected acquisitions to ascertain among other things that excessive or nonessential requirements are eliminated; that the solicitation clearly describes what the government plans to buy; and that business management considerations are properly incorporated.

q. Source Selection Advisory Council (SSAC). A group of senior government personnel appointed by the SSA to provide counsel during the source selection process and to prepare for the SSA a comparative analysis of the evaluation results of the SSEB.

r. Source Selection Authority (SSA). The official designated to direct the source selection process and make the source selection decision.

s. Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB). A group of government personnel representing the various functional and technical disciplines relevant to the acquisition that evaluates proposals and reports its findings to the SSAC.

t. Source Selection Evaluation Team (SSET). A combined SSAC and SSEB alternative source selection organization that may be used at the discretion of the SSA. An SSET may not be used when Secretariat representatives are designated for membership on the SSAC.

u. Source Selection Plan (SSP). A plan, approved by the SSA, that describes in detail how the source selection team (SSAC and SSEB or SSET) is organized, how the proposals will be evaluated and analyzed and how the source or sources will be selected.

v. Specific Criteria. A subset of evaluation criteria that relate to specific program characteristics. Specific criteria typically are divided into technical and/or management areas. These areas are divided into factors, which are further divided into subfactors and elements, as necessary, depending on the complexity of the factor being evaluated.

w. Strength. A significant, outstanding, or exceptional aspect of an offeror’s proposal that exceeds the evaluation standard and provides a useful capability that will be included in the specification, or statement of work, or is inherent in the offeror’s process, so that the government will be assured of receiving the benefit under the resultant

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contract.

x. Weakness. An aspect of or omission from an offeror's proposal that contributes to a deficiency in meeting an evaluation standard or is otherwise a shortcoming of the proposal that has the potential to degrade contract performance.

**AA-104 Policies.** The following policies apply:

a. It is Air Force policy to provide for full and open competition, or when full and open competition is not possible (see FAR Part 6), to obtain competition to the maximum extent practicable.

b. The SSA shall be presented with sufficient in-depth information on each of the competing offerors and their proposals to permit an objective selection decision.

c. The SSAC will be staffed with senior government personnel possessing broad experience in specific fields, such as systems development, systems engineering, manufacturing, operational requirements, finance, logistics, law and contracting. For major programs, the chairperson and the SSAC member from each Air Force organization represented should be a general officer or a member of the Senior Executive Service. The primary SSAC members, who represent HQ USAF and the Secretariat, shall be afforded an opportunity to advise the SSAC Chairperson or SSA before key formal source selection events and decisions. To accomplish this, the SSAC chairperson shall convene the SSAC and allow that body to review drafts of briefings and supporting background material. These key events include briefing the initial evaluation results, competitive range determinations, and final evaluation results.

d. Only fully qualified personnel possessing the professional skills and knowledge required for an objective evaluation and assessment of offeror's proposals shall be selected to participate on the SSEB. The Program Manager is usually designated the SSEB chairperson.

e. Early industry involvement including the use of draft RFPs is recommended to obtain industry comments. The contracting officer may request industry feedback on contract type, performance, schedule, Contract Data Requirements Lists (CDRLs), specifications, statements of work, and other requirements that impact costs or restrict technical solutions. Equal access for all potential offerors must be afforded and a cut-off date will be established for receipt of comments to permit government evaluation and incorporation of accepted changes into the formal solicitation. The Program Office shall evaluate recommendations, make appropriate changes and provide industry feedback

on disposition of the recommendations.

f. The rating system used in evaluating and analyzing proposals shall be described in the SSP. The rating system shall be structured to evaluate the offeror's proposal to meet the requirement as well as the strengths, weaknesses and risks associated with each proposal. The rating system must at a minimum include written narratives at the factor level and subfactor level and descriptive color coding at the factor level. (See paragraph AA-304.) The objective of the rating system is to display an assessment of all important aspects of the offeror's proposal.

g. Except where award without discussions is planned in accordance with FAR 15.610, it is Air Force policy to conduct written or oral discussions with all offerors in the competitive range. These discussions should lead to submission of BAFOs, which will culminate in signed contractual documents representing the firm commitment of each such offeror.

h. The use of auctioning techniques, such as indicating to an offeror a price which must be met to obtain further consideration, or informing an offeror that its price is not low in relation to that of another offeror, are strictly prohibited. This prohibition does not preclude discussing price or cost elements that are not clear or appear to be unreasonable or unjustified. Discussions may encourage offerors to put forward their most favorable price proposals. However, the price elements of any other offeror must not be discussed, disclosed, or compared. Technical leveling and technical transfusion through discussions with offerors are also strictly prohibited.

i. The request for BAFO must not be used as either an auctioning technique or to pressure offerors to lower prices. All changes in price at BAFO must be fully substantiated by offerors. The common cut-off date for conclusion of discussions and requests for a BAFO must be scheduled to ensure that all competitors have an equal opportunity for discussion.

j. The cognizant Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) and Defense Contract Management Command (DCMC) personnel should be invited to take part, as appropriate, in reviewing the solicitation and assisting in contract negotiation.

**AA-105 Source Selection Authority (SSA).**

a. Unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of the Air Force, ASAF(A) is the SSA for those contract actions where the application of this appendix is mandatory under paragraph AA-101a.

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Additionally, the ASAF(A) may serve as SSA for any other acquisition deemed appropriate.

b. The ASAF(A) will normally retain SSA for Major, Selected, and Other Program contract actions meeting the thresholds under paragraph AA-101a(1), (2) and (3). The authority for selecting a source for individual contract actions falling below the thresholds established under paragraph AA-101a(1), (2) and (3) is delegated by ASAF(A) to the applicable Program Executive Officer (PEO) or Designated Acquisition Commander (DAC) with the authority to redelegate. Redlegation can be made on either a case-by-case basis or by blanket delegation and shall be in writing. It is Air Force policy to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest on all source selections. In support of this policy, the PEO/DAC, in consultation with the AFMC Commander or Vice Commander, shall select a suitable neutral party as SSA when the "normal" SSA would create the appearance of a conflict. For example, if an Air Logistics Center (ALC) is competing as part of a Depot Maintenance Competition, AFMC/CC or the PEO/DAC may, in accordance with MAJCOM procedures, select an alternate as SSA instead of the Commander of the ALC involved in the competition.

c. For Communications and Computer acquisitions designated as Selected Programs, SSA is delegated to the PEO unless otherwise directed by the ASAF(A). For those Communications and Computer acquisitions designated as a MAIS or with an estimated value of \$100 million or more and not assigned to a PEO, ASAF(A) has delegated SSA to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Acquisition & Management) (PDASAF(A&M)), with the authority to redelegate.

d. The ASAF(A) will normally retain SSA for Other Contracting contract actions meeting the thresholds under paragraph AA-101a(5). The authority for selecting a source for individual contract actions falling below the thresholds established under paragraph AA-101a(5) is delegated to Major Command Commanders with the authority to redelegate. Redlegation can be made on either a case-by-case basis or by blanket delegation and shall be in writing.

e. When the ASAF(A) authority has been delegated on Major, Selected, or Other Programs or Communications and Computer acquisitions assigned to a PEO or DAC, the SSA will inform ASAF(A) of significant events in the source selection. For all source selections meeting the thresholds of this appendix, the SSA will personally notify ASAF(A) before the announcement of the award, unless other instructions are provided.

**AA-106 Organization.** Formal source selection contem-

plates creation of a separate source selection organization and management chain of command (SSA, SSAC, and SSEB) for each acquisition. The organization must be structured to ensure continuity, and to provide for active ongoing involvement of appropriate contracting, technical, logistics, legal, cost, and other functional staff management expertise. The PRAG (if used) normally reports directly to the SSA or SSAC. See Attachment 1 for diagrams of typical source selection organizations. The source selection organization must be consistent with the organization described in the SSP.

**AA-107 Responsibilities and Duties.** A successful source selection requires teamwork. Members of the SSAC and SSEB from all disciplines must work together to ensure that the SSA is presented an accurate integrated assessment of each offeror's proposal. Each member shall be given access to the full range of evaluation tools available, including the advice of personnel in other disciplines who serve as source selection advisors. The listing of key responsibilities and duties below are not in chronological order. Their sequence can vary widely depending upon the circumstances surrounding a given acquisition.

a. The SSA is responsible for the proper and efficient conduct of the entire source selection process encompassing proposal solicitation, evaluation, selection and contract award. The SSA has, subject to law and applicable regulations, full responsibility and authority to select source(s) for award and approve the execution of contracts. The SSA shall:

(1) Review and approve in writing the SSP including any special instructions or guidance regarding solicitation provisions, contract clauses and objectives;

(2) Appoint the SSAC Chairperson, Secretariat and HQ USAF members of the SSAC and advisors to the SSA or SSAC;

(3) Provide the SSAC and SSEB with guidance and instructions for conducting the source selection;

(4) Caution all involved in the source selection of the consequences of unauthorized disclosure of source selection information;

(5) Approve the Contracting Officer's competitive range determination. This approval may be delegated to the SSAC chairperson (without further delegation) except that authority to exclude any offeror from the competitive range (at any time during the source selection process) is not delegable;

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(6) Make selection decisions and document the supporting rationale in the Source Selection Decision Document;

(7) Coordinate on any Contracting Officer decision to request more than one BAFO. (See 5315.611);

(8) Review and approve issuance of Deficiency Reports (DRs) (See paragraph AA-306); and

(9) Review and approve Clarification Requests (CRs), when the SSA is other than an individual in the Air Force Secretariat. (See paragraph AA-307).

b. The SSAC Chairperson shall:

(1) Ensure that personnel resources and time assigned to source selection reflect the complexity of the program;

(2) Appoint members and advisors to the SSAC (other than Secretariat and HQ USAF members), subject to approval of the SSA;

(3) Ensure that all persons receiving source selection information are instructed to comply with applicable standards of conduct (see paragraph AA-403);

(4) Designate the chairperson and approve membership of the SSEB and PRAG (if used);

(5) Review and approve issuance of CRs, when the SSA is in the Air Force Secretariat;

(6) Convene meetings of the SSAC to analyze the evaluation and findings of the SSEB and to develop the SSAC analysis for submission to the SSA;

(7) Cause the preparation of a Source Selection Decision Document for the SSA's signature, unless otherwise directed by the SSA;

(8) Ensure that all source selection team members execute the Source Selection Information Briefing Certificate (See Attachment 11); and

(9) When award is made without discussions, review any deficiencies of the other offerors with the SSA.

c. The SSAC shall:

(1) Review and approve the evaluation standards developed by the Program Office;

(2) Determine if it is desirable to weight the evaluation

criteria;

(3) Review and recommend approval of the SSP to the SSA;

(4) Review the Contracting Officer's competitive range determination and provide comments to the SSA;

(5) Review the PRAG's assessment of performance risk, if a PRAG is used;

(6) Provide briefings and consultation at the request of the SSA;

(7) Offer a recommendation for the SSA's consideration, but only when requested by the SSA; and

(8) Prepare the SSAC Analysis Report for submission to the SSA. A copy of the SSEB Evaluation Report will be attached.

d. The SSEB shall:

(1) Schedule the ASP (SSEB Chairperson);

(2) Establish a Contract Definitization Team as an integral part of the SSEB. The Contracting Officer or head of the contracting office will be appointed the head of the Contract Definitization Team;

(3) Conduct an in-depth review and evaluation of each proposal against the solicitation requirements, the approved evaluation criteria, and the evaluation standards;

(4) Provide briefings and consultations concerning the evaluation as required by the SSA or SSAC;

(5) Prepare and submit the SSEB Evaluation Report to the SSAC for analysis along with a summary report of the findings;

(6) Prepare a draft of the SSAC Analysis Report, unless otherwise requested by the SSAC; and

(7) Approve the formal contractor debriefing.

e. The Program Office shall:

(1) Develop the acquisition strategy, initiate ASP proceedings, and prepare the AP and SSP;

(2) Propose the evaluation criteria for SSA approval as part of the SSP;

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(3) Propose the relative importance of the evaluation criteria in the SSP and develop the specific language to be included in Section M of the solicitation;

(4) Propose evaluation standards;

(5) Develop screening criteria for establishing a source list and include the screening criteria in the SSP;

(6) Propose the SSP for approval by the SSA after it is coordinated with the SSAC;

(7) Prepare the solicitation for review and approval by the SSAC;

(8) Prepare and furnish to the SSEB an independent Government assessment of potential proposal risks before receipt of proposals;

(9) Ensure that the SSAC and SSEB are briefed on their responsibilities before any proposals are reviewed; and

(10) Ensure that all required business and contract clearances are obtained before the SSA briefing and the announcement of the selection decision.

f. The Contracting Officer shall:

(1) Chair the Contract Definitization Team and be responsible for all business aspects of the acquisition;

(2) Prepare any required requests for delegation;

(3) Prepare the RFP and release the RFP after it, the acquisition plan, and the Source Selection Plan have been approved;

(4) Notify SAF/AQCS that the source selection is in process;

(5) Serve as the sole point of contact between offerors and the government during the source selection process;

(6) Issue any required RFP amendments;

(7) Receive proposals from offerors;

(8) Request preaward surveys and audits, as appropriate;

(9) Release letters to contractors that are outside competitive range concurrently with the release of CRs/DRs to contractors within the competitive range;

(10) Prepare model contracts;

(11) Receive responses to CRs/DRs;

(12) Chair discussions with contractors and ensure that the team membership remains consistent for all discussions with offerors;

(13) Request, receive and evaluate Best and Final Offers;

(14) Send DD-LA(AR) 1279 report to SAF/LLP to announce contract award (see 5305.303-90);

(15) Award the contract to the successful offeror, distribute the contract, issue notice of contract award, and notify unsuccessful offerors;

(16) Conduct postaward conference with awardee; and

(17) Promptly debrief unsuccessful offerors at their request.

g. Headquarters Major Command (or FOA) Chief of Contracting or Deputy shall:

(1) Serve as primary advisor to the Commander on source selection policy and participate as a member of ASPs and SSACs;

(2) Assign appropriate contracting individuals to participate in acquisition strategy panels;

(3) Ensure that a solicitation review board is convened, as appropriate; and

(4) Maintain a schedule of key SSAC meetings. Times, dates and locations for these meetings should be planned and scheduled as far in advance as possible, giving due consideration to potential conflicts and potential consolidations with other significant source selection meetings. As a minimum, the key meetings shall include:

(A) The solicitation release authorization meeting;

(B) The briefing of the initial evaluation results including competitive range determinations; and

(C) The briefing of the final evaluation results.

h. SAF/AQCS shall:

(1) Serve as the Secretariat and HQ USAF Action Office for staffing all source selection actions, such as, del-



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egations, SSAC Chairperson nominations, and SSPs;

(2) Coordinate scheduling of Source Selection meetings and control access to briefings chaired by ASAF(A); and

(3) Manage the coordination and approval of all Source Selection documents and facilitate resolution of contractual issues, to ensure timely processing and approval within the Secretariat.

**AA-108 Advisors.**

(a) Government and non-government experts may be called upon to provide advisory assistance to the SSA, SSAC, or SSEB. Advisors may objectively review a proposal in a particular functional area and provide comments and recommendations to the government's decision makers. They may not determine strengths and weaknesses, establish initial or final assessments of risks, or actually rate or rank offeror's proposals.

(b) The following additional restrictions are placed on non-government advisors. Non-government advisors shall not be:

(1) Provided offeror proprietary, confidential or privileged commercial or financial data unless prior written consent is obtained from the offeror;

(2) Allowed to participate in oral presentations or discussions, unless requested by the SSA or SSAC chairperson; and

(3) Allowed to participate in government decision making meetings, such as SSAC sessions or briefings, unless the SSA or SSAC chairperson requests that they be present during a particular portion of the meeting when they may be called upon to provide technical expertise.

(c) When non-government advisors are used, the solicitation must include a provision advising offerors that non-government contractor employees will have access to proposals (see FAR 15.413-2(f)). A provision may be included in the solicitation identifying the non-government advisors and their employees and advising that any objection to disclosure:

(1) Should be provided in writing prior to the date set for receipt of proposals; and

(2) Shall include a detailed statement of the basis for the objection.

(d) An organizational conflict of interest (OCI) clause covering non-disclosure of contractor data shall be included in contracts where the contractor is to participate as a non-government advisor to a source selection (see FA R 9.5).

**AA-109 Conflicts of Interest.** All persons involved in the source selection process (including non-Air Force personnel) will be instructed to inform the SSA if their participation in source selection activities might result in a real, apparent, possible, or potential conflict of interest. When so advised, the SSA will disqualify any person whose participation in the source selection process could raise questions regarding real, apparent, possible, or potential conflicts of interest.

**A A - 110 Solicitation and Contract Documents.** The Program Office will provide, upon request and in a timely manner, copies of the solicitation or other source selection documents to SAF/AQC.

**AA-111 Plant Visits.** Plant visits by the SSAC and SSEB may be beneficial during the source selection process. Plant visits by source selection personnel must be for a specific, clearly stated purpose, and be approved by the SSAC chairperson. The SSAC chairperson should ensure that all visits are made on an impartial basis (see FA R Subpart 42.4, regarding correspondence with contractors and visits to contractor facilities). Some examples of potentially beneficial plant visits are:

a. Presolicitation visits, as a preliminary step to the identification of prospective sources;

b. Key SSEB members' visits during the evaluation phase to develop knowledge for judging the potential for correction of deficiencies;

c. SSAC visits immediately before assembling all facts pertaining to the selection of the prospective contractor(s);

d. Manufacturing Methods/Production Capability Reviews and Production Readiness Reviews required to accurately define the contractor's proposed method of manufacture and capability to manufacture; and

e. Software Development Capability Assessment (SDCA). For programs where software development is critical, it may be appropriate to conduct an SDCA and associated plant visits.

**AA-112 Interface With Contractors.** All personnel must be cautioned that only the Contracting Officer may commit the U.S. Government. Personnel involved in the source

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selection must avoid any situation or contact with any competing offeror that is not essential, or would raise questions of impropriety. The objectivity of the source selection process may be impaired by contacts between government personnel and prime/subcontractors involved in the competition during the period between the release of the solicitation and announcement of the source selection decision. Contacts with prospective contractors regarding the specific source selection must be avoided, except for personnel directly participating in source selection discussions and contract negotiations.

**AA-113 Foreign Military Sales.** When the Air Force conducts a major source selection for a Foreign Military Sales (FMS) customer or in accordance with a cooperative agreement with a foreign government, the procedures of this appendix will be followed unless a deviation is approved in accordance with paragraph AA-114.

a. The FMS customer shall not participate in the formal source selection process. Subject to approval by the SSA, representatives of the customer country may be called upon by the SSEB or SSAC to clarify technical or management questions arising during evaluation of contractor proposals. The cost data or any part of a contractor's cost proposal shall not be released to any representative of the FMS customer. Representatives of the FMS customer shall not participate in contract negotiations.

b. Source selection decisions in international cooperative projects are the responsibility of the host nation in accordance with the terms of the cooperative agreement. When the Air Force represents the United States as host nation, this appendix should be followed. In accordance with the terms of the specific cooperative agreement, all participating nations may be represented on the SSEB and SSAC, but the SSA shall, after considering the advice of the SSEB and SSAC, make the source selection decision.

**AA-114 Deviations.** Deviations to this appendix may be granted only by the ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M), unless this appendix is used at the discretion of the SSA (see paragraph AA-101a, Note 3), in which case the SSA may approve deviations.

a. When the SSA is the ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M), a request for deviation may be included in the SSP and must specifically identify the deviation with adequate rationale.

b. Other requests for deviations shall be submitted in writing through appropriate channels to SAF/AQCS.

**AA-115 Regulatory References.** A list of key regulatory references pertaining to formal source selection is provided in Attachment 2.

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**Part 2 - PRE-EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**

**AA-201 Introduction.** This part explains the major steps in the source selection process that occur before receipt of initial proposals.

**AA-202 Acquisition Strategy.**

a. An Acquisition Strategy Panel (ASP) shall be held for all acquisitions subject to this appendix.

b. Secretariat and HQ USAF representatives listed in Attachment 3 shall be invited to participate. Invitations should be received normally at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled ASP. SAF/AQCS shall also be advised of the time and place of these ASPs.

**AA-203 Delegation or Retention of Source Selection Authority.**

a. Delegation of source selection authority shall be an agenda item at the ASP. The discussions regarding delegation should be reflected in the minutes of the ASP.

b. If delegation of source selection authority is requested, the request shall be sent to the ASAF(A) or the PDASAF(A&M), as appropriate, through SAF/AQCS. The request shall be accompanied by the ASP briefing charts and minutes. The request should concisely identify the acquisition, request delegation and identify tentative SSAC meeting dates for solicitation release authorization, initial proposal evaluation review, competitive range determination, and final decision briefing.

(1) If the delegation request is approved, the ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M) shall sign and forward the delegation decision memorandum to the PEO, DAC, or appropriate Commander identifying individuals who will serve on the SSAC and identifying the SAF/AQCS action officer.

(2) If the delegation request is not approved and selection authority is retained within the Secretariat, SAF/AQC shall ask the PEO, DAC or appropriate commander to nominate an SSAC chairperson. The ASAF(A) reply memorandum will identify the SSA, appoint the SSAC chairperson, and identify Secretariat and HQ USAF individuals selected for SSAC membership and the SAF/AQCS action officer. The program office shall forward a draft SSP through the SSAC chairperson to SAF/AQCS. SAF/AQCS will coordinate the SSP with primary SSAC members within the Secretariat and HQ USAF before forwarding it to the SSA.

c. If a PEO, DAC, or MAJCOM/CC believes that ASAF(A) should retain source selection authority for an acquisition normally delegated in accordance with para-

graph AA-105, the PEO, DAC or MAJCOM/CC shall forward a memorandum to ASAF(A) through SAF/AQCS with the ASP briefing charts and minutes. The memorandum will: (1) justify recommending ASAF(A) retention; (2) nominate a proposed SSAC chairperson; (3) include a proposed source selection schedule; and (4) request identification of Secretariat and HQ USAF SSAC members. The memorandum should be sent as soon as possible after the ASP. The ASAF(A) will document the retention or delegation decision in a Decision Memorandum. If source selection authority is retained by the ASAF(A), ASAF(A) will appoint the SSAC chairperson and forward the SSP to SAF/AQCS for coordination of Secretariat and HQ USAF SSAC members prior to approval by the SSA.

**AA-204 Basis of Award, Evaluation Criteria and General Considerations.**

a. The basis for source selection and award of a contract must be limited to criteria or considerations that are set forth in the solicitation. Therefore, it is mandatory that the RFP clearly state all characteristics of the requirement that will be considered by the Air Force in making the source selection. Air Force source selection awards are based on an integrated assessment of each offeror's cost (price) criterion, specific criteria, assessment criteria, proposal risk, performance risk, and general considerations. These criteria are set forth in a structured manner in Section M of the RFP. This section serves as the "rules of engagement" for the source selection.

b. Evaluation criteria should be tailored to the characteristics of a particular program and should include only those significant aspects expected to have an impact on the ultimate selection decision. Evaluation criteria consist of three types: cost (price) criterion, specific criteria, and assessment criteria. The cost (price) criterion relates to the evaluation of the offeror's proposed costs (price). The specific criteria relate to program characteristics, such as reliability, availability, maintainability, transportability, and environmental considerations. The assessment criteria serve as a basis for evaluating each offeror's proposal as it relates to the specific criteria. See Attachment 5 for an example of the general format of the evaluation matrix.

(1) Cost (price) is a mandatory evaluation criterion that shall be evaluated as a factor in every AFFARS Appendix AA source selection to determine realism, completeness and reasonableness. Examples of this factor might be instant contract cost (price), or life cycle cost. Evaluation results are summarized without use of color coding and without incorporating individual offeror cost performance risk.

(2) Specific criteria relate to program characteristics.

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The specific criteria are typically divided into technical and/or management evaluation areas. Examples of specific criteria might include areas, such as, technical, supportability, manufacturing, operational utility, design approach, readiness and support, test and management. These areas are further subdivided into factors, subfactors and in some instances, elements. The level of subdivision depends on the complexity of the area being evaluated. Factors should be related to characteristics which are important to program success, such as, reliability and maintainability, system effectiveness, producibility, supportability, and data management (including the Contract Data Requirements List). The SSP and Section M will state the level at which color/adjectival ratings will be assigned.

(3) Assessment criteria form the basis for evaluating each offeror's proposal in regards to the relevant evaluation criteria. Evaluators use assessment criteria in conjunction with evaluation standards to judge how well an offeror's proposal satisfies each of the relevant evaluation criteria.

c. General considerations relate to proposed contractual terms and conditions, results of preaward surveys, past performance (if performance risk methodology is not used), and other surveys or reviews.

d. Proposal risks are assessments associated with cost, schedule, and performance or technical aspects of the program.

e. Performance risks relate to cost and specific criteria. As a minimum, performance risk must be assessed for each area.

**AA-205 Source Selection Plan (SSP).**

a. The SSP is a key document in conducting the source selection. It should include applicable Program Management Directive (PMD) guidance or direction and contain the elements described below to ensure timely staff review and SSA approval. The Program Office prepares a written SSP for all source selections conducted under this regulation.

(1) The SSP must be submitted sufficiently in advance of the planned acquisition action to permit review and approval by the SSA and early establishment of the SSAC or SSEB. If ASAF(A) or PDASAF(A&M) is the source selection authority, the SSP shall be sent to SAF/AQCS for coordination and approval by ASAF(A).

(2) When changes in acquisition strategy require a revision to the SSP, the Program Office will send the proposed revision through source selection channels to the SSA.

b. The plan shall include the following sections (support may be provided by documents referenced in and attached to the SSP):

(1) INTRODUCTION. Describe briefly what is being acquired.

(2) SOURCE SELECTION ORGANIZATION. Describe the proposed SSA, SSAC, SSEB (or SSET) and PRAG (if used) organizations; list recommended key members by name, by position title, or by functional area. The plan must identify other government organizations that will be represented on the SSAC and SSEB.

(3) PROPOSED PRESOLICITATION ACTIVITIES. Describe the activities leading up to release of the solicitation, including market survey, draft solicitations, synopsis, solicitation review panel, and SSAC solicitation release meeting. For the market survey, discuss how it was used to achieve competition, including a discussion of screening criteria, if applicable.

(4) EVALUATION PROCEDURES. Specify the evaluation and rating methodology. Outline the process to be followed in formulating the government's best estimate of the total cost. Items that are considered to have sufficient cost impact to warrant special consideration will be separately identified. Items which represent nonquantifiable cost risks should be identified. Plans for developing Independent Cost Analysis (ICA), Most Probable Cost (MPC) and Life Cycle Cost (LCC) estimates will be presented. The cost criterion will not be rated but must be ranked in order of importance. The methodology to be followed for evaluating offeror's cost proposals must be described in the SSP.

(5) EVALUATION CRITERIA. Describe the cost (price) criterion and specific criteria including factors and, when appropriate, subfactors and elements. Describe the assessment criteria and how they apply to the evaluation. The relative importance of the cost (price) criterion, specific criteria, and general considerations will be stated. Assessment criteria must also be ranked in relative order of importance or identified as of equal importance. Describe general considerations and how they relate to the evaluation of the offeror's proposal.

(6) ACQUISITION STRATEGY. The SSP will include a summary of the acquisition strategy, including type of contract(s) proposed, the incentives contemplated, milestone demonstrations intended, special contract clauses, etc. The SSP acquisition strategy must reflect the strategy developed in the AP.

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etc. The SSP acquisition strategy must reflect the strategy developed in the AP.

(7) **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS.** Identify and establish the schedule for significant source selection activities in sufficient detail to allow the reviewing authorities to assess the practicality of the schedule. The schedule of events in Attachment 4 may be used as a guide.

(8) **NON-GOVERNMENT ADVISORS.** The source selection plan shall address the use of non-government advisors. (See FAR 15.413-2(f) and paragraph AA-108).

c. The SSP shall be formally approved by the SSA before issuing the solicitation.

**AA-206 Developing Evaluation Standards.**

a. The SSEB conducts its evaluation by measuring each proposal against objective standards established at the lowest level of subdivision. The SSEB shall not compare proposals against each other.

b. A standard establishes a baseline to measure how well an offeror's proposal satisfies the evaluation criteria. It establishes the level an offeror's proposal must meet in any factor, subfactor, or element to be judged acceptable (green) as set forth in paragraph AA-304. A standard may be either quantitative or qualitative, depending on the criteria it addresses (see Attachment 6 for examples).

c. Evaluation standards shall not be included in the SSP or the solicitation. They should normally be defined and documented prior to the release of the solicitation, must be approved before beginning the evaluation of proposals, and shall not be changed once any offeror's proposal is opened. Evaluation standards shall not be released to any potential offeror nor to anyone who is not directly involved in the source selection evaluation effort.

**AA-207 Solicitation.**

a. The Contracting Officer is responsible for preparing the solicitation. The Program Office is responsible for preparing key portions of the RFP, such as the statement of work and the data requirements. The solicitation must accurately convey to offerors the technical, schedule, cost and contractual requirements of the acquisition. In addition:

(1) The evaluation criteria and general considerations must be set forth in the solicitation as they appear in the approved SSP. The solicitation shall indicate the relative

importance among cost (price) criterion, specific evaluation criteria (including areas, factors, and any significant subfactors), and general considerations. If requirements or conditions significantly change so as to negate or modify the evaluation criteria originally established in the solicitation, each offeror shall be informed by a solicitation amendment of the adjusted criteria and basis for award. Offerors shall then be given a reasonable time to revise their proposals. After proposals have been received, a change in evaluation criteria or requirements may require resolicitation (see FAR 15.606).

(2) The solicitation should contain a matrix which correlates the evaluation criteria with the information to be submitted in the proposal. The offerors should prepare and submit their proposal in sections aligned with and cross indexed to the evaluation criteria to facilitate government review and evaluation. Offerors should be asked to identify technical, cost, schedule, manufacturing and proposal risks associated with their proposals, together with their approaches for resolving or avoiding the identified risks.

(3) The solicitation shall include a notice stating that unrealistically low proposed costs or prices, initially or subsequently, may be grounds for eliminating a proposal from competition either on the basis that the offeror does not understand the requirement or the offeror has made an unrealistic proposal. Offerors should be advised that offers should be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate their cost credibility and that offeror's estimates that are unexplainably low may cause the offer to be eliminated from the competition (subject to the requirements of FAR 15.608 and FAR 15.610).

(4) An executive summary should accompany the solicitation to briefly describe and highlight the salient aspects of the solicitation. The executive summary shall not contain any new information or requirements not already discussed in the solicitation.

b. A Solicitation Review Board shall be established in accordance with MAJCOM procedures to thoroughly review the solicitation for consistency with law, policy, regulations, the requirements of OSD and Air Force program direction, the SSP and the AP. The panel should be familiar with the acquisition strategy, model contract provisions and clauses, quantities, schedules, and data requirements. The panel shall thoroughly examine all aspects of the solicitation to eliminate unnecessary or unduly restrictive requirements. The program manager shall ensure that the solicitation requirements will satisfy operational needs. If SSEB members have been identified, they should participate in the preparation and review of the solicitation docu-

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ment.

**AA-208 Notice of Source Selection Action.** When the solicitation is released, the SSAC chairperson shall ensure that a notice of source selection action in progress is forwarded to all appropriate Air Force Commands, SAF/AQCS, and the potential offerors. The notification will identify the system, subsystem, or project involved; the anticipated period of the source selection activities; and include statements to the effect that: (1) contacts regarding, or briefings concerning, the program by participating offerors are not allowed; (2) the Contracting Officer is the only person authorized to contact offerors; and (3) the SSA is the only person with authority to release information regarding an ongoing source selection.

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**Part 3 - PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SOURCE SELECTION DECISION**

**AA-301 General.** This part explains the major steps in the source selection process from receipt of initial proposals through the source selection decision including discussions with offerors. Proposals shall be evaluated in a fair, comprehensive and impartial manner.

**AA-302 Offerors' Oral Presentations.**

a. The SSAC should consider having oral presentations if the requirement is complex or if one or more of the offerors have not been awarded contracts in the past by the acquisition activity. In these instances, oral presentations help the Government ensure that it fully understands the proposals.

b. If oral presentations are deemed appropriate:

(1) Presentations should be conducted before commencement of evaluation of proposals to provide an overview of the entire proposal before the evaluation of its specific parts;

(2) Each offeror shall be given an opportunity to make an oral presentation so that no offeror will have a competitive advantage;

(3) To ensure objectivity during the evaluation process, all Government participants in the evaluation must attend either all or none of the oral presentations; and

(4) The SSEB chairperson shall ensure that minutes are taken of each oral presentation and included in the source selection file.

**AA-303 Technical Evaluation.** The SSEB chairperson shall ensure that all elements of the evaluation are coordinated and that the evaluation report on each offeror is logical and consistent.

a. The SSEB accomplishes a technical evaluation of each of the initial offers using the assessment criteria to analyze each proposal with respect to the evaluation criteria in Section M of the RFP.

b. Evaluators shall indicate the value of each proposal in relation to the evaluation standards which were established before receipt of proposals. The SSEB shall not compare proposals against each other.

c. Evaluators must understand the requirement, the solicitation, the evaluation criteria and the evaluation standards. Evaluators are encouraged to engage in discussions with advisors, or other SSEB members when it is necessary to

verify certain aspects of proposals under their review.

d. The technical evaluation results in four distinct products that are included in the SSEB Evaluation Report: (1) Proposal ratings; (2) Proposal risk assessments; (3) Narrative Assessments (which identify strengths and weaknesses and support ratings and proposal risk assessments); and (4) Recommended Deficiency Reports and Clarification Requests.

**AA-304 Use of Rating Techniques.**

a. After assessing the offerors' data, the evaluator shall apply the rating system prescribed by the SSP and rate each proposal in relation to the evaluation standards.

b. Normally, color ratings are used. When used, color ratings are mandatory at the factor and subfactor level. Colors may also be used at the element level, although symbols may be used as an alternative at these lower levels. The color rating depicts how well each offeror meets the evaluation standards. Color ratings are not summarized above the factor level. However, if the SSA requires a summary rating at the area level in the SSP, color ratings shall be used. To provide for a standard color scheme, the spectrum below shall be used (see Attachment 5 for an example). Ratings must be accompanied by a consistent narrative assessment (inclusive of strengths and weaknesses) of the basis for the rating.

<u>Color</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Blue	Exceptional	Exceeds specified performance or capability in a beneficial way to the Air Force, and has no significant weakness.
Green	Acceptable	Meets evaluation standards and any weaknesses are readily corrected.
Yellow	Marginal	Fails to meet evaluation standards; however, any significant deficiencies are correctable.
Red	Unacceptable	Fails to meet a minimum requirement of the RFP and the deficiency is uncorrectable without a major revision of the proposal.

c. Use of numerical weights is discouraged because it implies that the technical team can differentiate between small differences in technical merit. Such determinations may be extremely difficult to support. Therefore, numerical weighting of evaluation criterion is not recommended. Nevertheless, if the SSAC decides to use numerical weights, they shall not be disclosed in the RFP.

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d. If an offeror's proposal is evaluated as unacceptable at any level of the evaluation criteria, this fact must be included in the rating and narrative assessment at that level and each higher evaluation criteria level. Therefore, a red or unacceptable rating at any level must be carried to the highest rated level.

e. Symbols may be used to indicate proposal ratings at the element level. For example, a plus (+) sign may be used to indicate that the offeror has exceeded the standard; a check (÷) to indicate that the offeror has met the standard; and a minus (-) to indicate that the standard has not been met for the element evaluated.

f. The following subjects are not color rated (although they still are considered by the SSAC as part of the integrated assessment):

(1) Financial capability, Production Readiness Reviews, and preaward surveys;

(2) Cost (price); and

(3) Risk.

g. Proposals are normally rated twice:

(1) Upon completion of the evaluation of the initial proposal; and

(2) At the end of discussions after BAFOs are received, if discussions are held.

NOTE: Both ratings will be maintained and submitted to the SSAC.

h. When displayed graphically in briefings or reports, changes in the initial color rating shall be displayed by superimposing one or more arrows in a color block showing the new color. The number and direction of the arrows used in each block on the chart indicates the extent and direction of change, (for example, one arrow upward indicates an improvement of one color rating). Any changes from the original proposal should be identified in the discussion of strengths, weaknesses and risk and analyzed for the SSA in the SSAC Analysis Report and SSA Briefing.

**AA-305 Assessment of Risk.**

a. There are two types of risk assessment. Proposal risk relates to the identification and assessment of the risks associated with an offeror's proposed approach as it relates to accomplishing the requirements of the solicitation. Performance risk relates to the assessment of an offeror's present and past work record to assess confidence in the offeror's ability to successfully perform as proposed. Proposal risk assessments will always be reflected in the evaluation matrix (see Attachment 5). Performance risk will be reflected in the matrix, except when it is addressed under general considerations.

(1) Use the following definitions when assessing proposal risks:

(A) HIGH (H) — Likely to cause significant serious disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance even with special contractor emphasis and close government monitoring;

(B) MODERATE (M) — Can potentially cause some disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance. However, special contractor emphasis and close government monitoring will probably be able to overcome difficulties; and

(C) LOW (L) — Has little potential to cause disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance. Normal contractor effort and normal government monitoring will probably be able to overcome difficulties.

(2) Use the following definitions when assessing performance risk:

(A) HIGH (H) - Significant doubt exists, based on the offeror's performance record, that the offeror can perform the proposed effort;

(B) MODERATE (M) - Some doubt exists, based on the offeror's performance record, that the offeror can perform the proposed effort;

(C) LOW (L) - Little doubt exists, based on the offeror's performance record, that the offeror can perform the proposed effort; and

(D) NOT APPLICABLE - No significant performance record is identifiable.

b. Each proposal and performance risk assessment will consider the number and severity of problems, the effort



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tiveness of corrective actions taken, and the overall work record. Consider also the offeror's demonstrated ability to effectively identify and take actions to abate program risks. The assessment of performance risk is not intended to be a simple arithmetic function of an offeror's performance on a list of contracts. The PRAG (if used) should place the greatest consideration on the information deemed most relevant and significant. In the cost area, more consideration should be given to efforts for similar end items, efforts during a similar phase of the acquisition cycle, and to efforts with similar contract types.

c. As a part of their proposal, offerors may be required to submit a proposal risk analysis which identifies proposal risk areas and the recommended approaches to minimize the impact of those risks on the overall success of the program.

d. Proposal risks associated with cost, schedule, and performance or technical aspects of the program must be assessed. Risks may be inherent in a proposed approach by virtue of its relationship to the state of the art. Risks may occur as a result of a particular technical approach, manufacturing plan, the selection of certain materials, processes, equipment, etc., or as a result of the cost, schedule and economic impacts associated with these approaches. Risk may also occur from the impact that these will have on the offeror's ability to perform in view of its technical approach. The prime's proposed subcontract arrangements may also impact proposal risk. For instance, a proposed fixed price subcontract for a high technical risk effort, or one with an unrealistic delivery schedule, can be expected to impact the overall effort and should be assessed in the proposal risk for that area or factor.

e. In evaluating proposal risks, the evaluators must consider the program office assessment and the offeror's assessment and make an independent judgment of the probability of success, the impact of failure, and the alternatives available to meet the requirements.

f. Proposal risk assessments shall be discussed in evaluation narratives along with strengths and weaknesses and shall be depicted in briefings with the color ratings for each factor, subfactor or element other than cost (price) as specified in Section M of the RFP. A proposal risk assessment rating and discussion is mandatory for each subfactor at the subfactor summary level.

g. The performance risk assessment will focus on cost and specific criteria. Factor level assessments may be used. Performance risk shall also be discussed in evaluation narratives along with strengths and weaknesses and depicted in briefings.

h. The risk assessment and color rating assigned to any factor or subfactor are independent of each other. Any risk assessment rating may be used with any color rating to reflect evaluation results.

i. It is the responsibility of the specific criteria evaluation teams to ensure that the cost team is informed of the identified proposal risks and the potential cost impact.

**AA-306 Deficiency Reports (DRs).**

a. During the initial evaluation of proposals, the SSEB must record separately and in addition to the narrative analysis, the deficiencies found in each offeror's proposal. It is important that deficiency reports be prepared at the time the deficiency is discovered. Late preparation often results in poorly substantiated reports. It is important that the evaluator document the effect the uncorrected deficiency would have on the program (see Attachment 7). The deficiency report will be provided to the Contract Definition Team who will in turn provide the offeror with the opportunity to amend its proposal to correct the deficiency. The release of deficiency reports (which constitutes discussions) will not begin until after the initial competitive range is determined and approval to release the reports is received from the SSA. Award shall not be made without discussion until the SSA has reviewed the deficiencies in each offeror's proposal.

b. Examples of deficiency reports are:

(1) A proposed approach which poses an unacceptable risk;

(2) An omission of data which makes it impossible to assess compliance with the standard for that requirement; or

(3) An approach taken by an offeror in the design of its system which is expected to yield undesirable performance.

c. Identified deficiencies shall be derived only from the evaluation of each offeror's proposal against evaluation standards, and then only when the proposal fails to meet the government's specified minimum level of compliance. Deficiencies must not be derived from a comparative evaluation of the relative strengths and weaknesses of competing offerors' proposals.

d. The offeror's response to the deficiency report is as important as the original proposal. The Contract Definition Team must transmit each offeror's response

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to the evaluation team for a technical analysis.

e. The deficiency report, which is a part of the overall SSEB evaluation report provided to the SSAC, must address all changes which have an impact on the original proposal.

f. The deficiency report may serve as a guide for debriefing offerors after contract award.

**AA-307 Clarification Requests (CRs).**

a. Evaluators must identify those aspects of the proposal which require clarification. If data provided in the proposal is inadequate for evaluation or contradictory statements are found, a clarification request should be issued. Two categories of clarification requests exist:

(1) Significant clarification requests (SCRs) will specifically identify the aspect of the offeror's proposal for which clarification is required and require that discussions with offerors be opened. Whenever performance risk assessment results in a possible rating of moderate or high, CRs should be developed. Clarification requests (see Attachment 7) are sent to the Contract Definition Team and submitted to the offerors in the same way as deficiencies. As with DRs, the SSA will review all CRs before providing them to offerors, and before any decision is made to award without discussions. The SSAC shall approve CRs if ASAF(A) or another individual within the Secretariat is the SSA; and

(2) Minor clarification requests (MCRs) are for the purpose of eliminating minor irregularities, informalities or apparent clerical mistakes. MCRs do not give the offeror an opportunity to revise or modify its proposal and do not constitute discussions. Subject to the concurrence of legal counsel, MCRs may be sent prior to the initial competitive range determination.

b. Release of any SCRs to an offeror constitutes discussions and shall not be sent before the initial competitive range determination.

**AA-308 Narrative Assessments**

a. Preparing the results of the evaluation in narrative form is an important aspect of the evaluation process. In preparing the written narrative, the evaluator should be aware that it will be the principal means available to the SSAC to perform a comparative analysis of the offers.

b. The evaluator must indicate in the narrative, as a minimum: what is offered; whether it meets or fails to meet the evaluation standard; any strengths or weaknesses; the

impact of any deficiencies; what can be done to remedy each deficiency; and a risk assessment of the offeror's proposal approach and ability to perform. Clarity and brevity are the keys to successfully prepared narratives.

**AA-309 Cost (Price) Evaluation.**

a. The purpose of cost (price) evaluation is to determine whether an offeror's proposed costs are realistic and complete in relation to the solicitation and the technical and management proposals, and to provide an assessment of the reasonableness of the proposed price.

(1) Realism is evaluated by assessing the compatibility of proposed costs with proposal scope and effort;

(2) Completeness is evaluated by assessing the level of detail the offeror provided in cost data for all RFP requirements in the statement of work, and assessing the traceability of estimates; and

(3) Reasonableness is evaluated by assessing the acceptability of the offeror's methodology used in developing the cost estimates.

b. Offerors' cost (price) proposals shall not be made available to technical evaluators. Cost (price) evaluators, however, should discuss the details of technical proposals with the technical evaluators (and may generally discuss specific cost elements) to aid in their evaluation of costs associated with labor categories and hours, materials, manufacturing processes and other elements of cost (price) as appropriate. Labor hour and material breakouts may be included in technical volumes of the proposal to aid in this process. Cost (price) evaluators should also use the DCAA Audit Report and the Contract Administration Office Field Price Analysis Report.

c. In addition to cost (price) analysis, further measurement of cost (price) reasonableness and realism will be made. This measurement will be accomplished by comparing the Most Probable Cost (MPC), the Program Office estimate and, if performed, the Independent Cost Analysis (ICA), with the proposed cost (price) after considering the risk associated with the technical approach and disposition of deficiencies.

d. Evaluation of the cost (price) realism of each proposal will be made without regard to any proposed ceiling on the government's obligation.

e. Consideration must be given to variations in amount of government-furnished property (GFP) requested or the use of government-owned facilities and tooling, and all other

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disparities before the offeror's proposal can be equitably evaluated. The evaluated costs shall be adjusted to account for these variations.

f. The cost team will initiate and maintain a cost baseline for each proposal to facilitate an understanding of the changes leading to the final cost (price). A summary of this baseline and all changes through BAFO shall be included in the SSAC report.

g. Following completion of the cost (price) evaluation, the SSAC will be provided with the cost team's findings as to the reasonableness, completeness and realism of each offeror's proposal. If a proposal is determined to be unrealistic, incomplete, or unreasonable, the reasons for this conclusion must be stated. When Most Probable Cost (MPC) or similar techniques are used, the SSAC will also be given visibility into the build-up of the evaluated government amount for each proposal through BAFO.

**AA-310 Coordination of Findings within the Source Selection Evaluation Board (SSEB).** After completing his or her evaluation, each evaluator must coordinate the findings with other team members to ensure consensus within the team. After accomplishing the intrateam coordination, team leaders must coordinate their findings with other team leaders. The coordination of findings between the various factor teams and the cost team is important. Additionally, the PRAG (if used) must identify and coordinate its findings with the SSEB to ensure a logical presentation to the SSAC and SSA.

**AA-311 Determination of Competitive Range.**

a. When written or oral discussions are conducted, they must be conducted with all responsible offerors who submit proposals within the competitive range. The determination as to which proposals are not in the competitive range, and the exclusion of offerors either before or as a result of written or oral discussions, will be made by the Contracting Officer, subject to approval by the SSA.

b. The competitive range must be determined after evaluation of all proposals received, on the basis of cost (price), technical, and other salient factors including proposal deficiencies and their potential for correction. Before including or excluding a proposal from within the competitive range, the possibility of its selection for award should be assessed. The objective is not to eliminate proposals from the competitive range, but to facilitate competition by conducting written and oral discussions with those offerors who have a reasonable chance of being selected for an award. When there is doubt as to whether a proposal is within the competitive range, the proposal should be included (see FAR

15.609).

c. The determination of competitive range is based on informed judgment and is complex in nature. All such decisions must be completely and adequately documented for the record. A proposal may be determined outside the competitive range if:

(1) It does not reasonably address the essential requirements of the solicitation;

(2) A substantial technical drawback is apparent in the proposal and sufficient correction or improvement to consider the proposal further would require virtually an entirely new technical proposal; or

(3) The proposal contains major technical or business deficiencies or omissions, or out-of-line costs, which initial or continuing discussions with the offeror could not reasonably be expected to cure. Before eliminating an offeror from the competitive range based on unrealistic costs or prices, it will be necessary, to the extent possible, and without discussions with the offeror, to determine the reason for the out-of-line costs or prices. For example, the costs might be attributable to a unique design approach, a technical breakthrough or an accelerated delivery. These may be legitimate reasons for the apparent out-of-line costs or prices.

d. Multiple competitive range determinations before BAFO are acceptable. For example, a second competitive range determination may be appropriate after responses to clarification requests and deficiency reports have been received.

e. Exclusion of an offeror from the competitive range at any time during the source selection process must be approved by the SSA (nondelegable). A meeting of the SSAC shall be convened to consider any such exclusion before SSA approval.

f. Offerors whose proposals are determined to be outside the competitive range and with whom initial or continuing discussions are not to be conducted, must be notified promptly in accordance with FAR 15.609.

**AA-312 Conducting Written or Oral Discussions.**

a. Oral or written discussions with offerors shall be led only by members of the Contract Definition Team with other SSEB members' support. The team will negotiate definitive contracts with all offerors determined to be within the competitive range. The team is the only point of contact between the SSEB and the offerors.

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b. All offerors determined to be in the competitive range shall be advised of any deficiencies in their proposals or portions of their proposals that require clarification and be given a reasonable opportunity to correct or resolve the deficiencies and to provide clarifications. Offerors may submit cost (price), technical, or other proposal revisions as a result of the discussions.

c. Discussions with each offeror must be confined exclusively to that offeror's proposal. Discussions must be conducted in a way that scrupulously avoids disclosure of the relative strengths and weaknesses of competing offerors, technical information or ideas, or cost (price) data from any other offeror's proposal.

d. At the conclusion of written or oral discussions, a final common cutoff date which allows a reasonable opportunity for submission of Best and Final Offers must be established and all remaining participants notified in writing. The notifications shall:

(1) State that discussions have been concluded and specify the date, time, and location BAFOs must be received;

(2) Identify to each offeror any remaining deficiencies in its proposal;

(3) Advise the offerors that any BAFO received after the final cutoff will be a late modification in accordance with FAR 15.412 and paragraph (c) of the clause at FAR 52.215-10, Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals of Proposals;

(4) Advise the offerors that if a BAFO is not received prior to the common cutoff for an offeror, that offeror's current proposal, reflecting any clarifications or revisions to date will be evaluated as its best and final offer; and

(5) Caution the offerors against buying-in and submitting unsupported changes to their prior offers

d. Contracting Officers shall not call for BAFOs more than once unless fully justified and approved in accordance with DFARS 215.611 and AFFARS 5315.611.

e. All proposal revisions and information provided by the offerors during the conduct of discussions and received prior to the common cutoff will be considered in the final source selection decision.

**AA-313 The SSEB Evaluation Report and Presentation.**

a. After the evaluation teams have completed their evaluation of the BAFOs, the SSEB chairperson will compile and present the SSEB's overall evaluation results to the SSAC in two forms:

(1) A written evaluation report; and

(2) An oral presentation.

NOTE: This report and presentation must convey to the SSAC the results and significant points of the SSEB and PRAG (if used) evaluations.

b. The evaluation report and oral presentation shall include the following:

(1) A narrative assessment of the technical evaluation. Narrative assessments shall be provided at the factor summary level and may include lower levels as necessary. Each factor assessment must be precise, identify the color rating, performance risk (if used), and proposal risk. It will highlight the significant strengths and weaknesses of each evaluated aspect of the proposal. (See Attachment 5 for an example of graphically displaying matrix information);

(2) An analysis of the offeror's Cost (Price);

(3) Results of evaluating contractual considerations and any other general considerations that were evaluated by the SSEB; and

(4) An overall performance assessment.

c. The objective of the SSEB Evaluation Report is to present a summary of the evaluation of each proposal against solicitation requirements based on established evaluation criteria and evaluation standards.

d. The SSAC will be expected to review and analyze the report at the time of the final evaluation briefing and provide any additional inputs to the SSA. The SSEB Evaluation Report shall be attached to the SSAC Analysis Report.

e. Supporting documentation for the SSEB Evaluation Report shall be organized in accordance with Major Command procedures. An audit trail from the highest to the lowest elements of the evaluation shall be provided by the supporting reports and documentation.

**AA-314 SSAC Analysis Report.**

a. The comparison of proposals is the responsibility of the SSAC and is based on an analysis of the evaluation per-

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formed by the SSEB and the results of contract negotiations.

b. The SSAC must present to the SSA a report analyzing all relevant information resulting from the evaluation of proposals and other considerations to support a final selection decision by the SSA. As a minimum, the contents described in Attachment 8 shall be included in every SSAC Analysis Report.

c. The SSAC Analysis Report must portray to the SSA in narrative form the results of the evaluation of the proposals as well as the results of final discussions, BAFO, and other considerations. A cost evaluation summary track shall be provided from initial proposals through BAFO.

d. The Contracting Officer shall advise the SSAC and SSA when the responsibility of any offeror is questioned. The SSAC Analysis Report shall include this information.

**AA-315 Source Selection Briefings.** Source Selection briefings are required by the SSAC and SSA. The SSEB chairperson is responsible for having the results of the evaluation briefed to the SSAC. The chairperson of the SSAC is responsible for having the results of the SSAC analysis briefed to the SSA. The recipients and the scope of the briefings depend on the organizational level at which the SSA has been established. All in attendance must complete a certification (see Attachment 11) in which they agree to safeguard source selection information (see paragraph AA-403). Any required briefings to the Secretariat to be held in the Pentagon shall be scheduled through SAF/AQCS who will control attendance.

a. When the SSA is the ASAF(A) or other official of the Secretariat and the briefing is held in the Pentagon, the following procedures shall be used:

(1) Unless otherwise approved by the chairman of the SSAC or the SSA, only members of the SSAC and advisors to the SSA shall attend the briefing. Necessary assistance will be provided by the designated SAF/AQCS action officer; and

(2) Copies of the slides and any text of oral presentations shall be provided to the SSA at the presentation. SAF/AQCS shall provide to the SSAC Chairperson, for the official file, a list of all the people who attend the briefings along with signed copies of the certification (see Attachment 11).

b. When SSA has been delegated to the PEO, DAC, or MAJCOM Commander, the SSA shall personally notify ASAF(A) of the award decision before the public

announcement of the award.

**AA-316 Selection and Contract Award.** The SSAC chairperson is responsible for preparing the Source Selection Decision Document for the SSA's signature. The assigned legal advisor and the senior contracting advisor shall coordinate on the Source Selection Decision Document. If the Source Selection Decision Document contains proprietary or source selection information, it shall be marked accordingly. The SSA's signature on the decision document is authority for the Contracting Officer to award a contract to the selected offeror(s) subject to the necessary administrative approvals. If the ASAF(A) or Secretary is the SSA, the Source Selection Decision Document is provided to SAF/AQCS for staffing and coordination with SAF/GCQ before it is presented to the SSA for signature. The approved Source Selection Decision Document is sent to the SSAC Chairperson who will provide it to the PCO, to include in the official contract file and the source selection record. This document contains:

a. The source selection decision;

b. Clear rationale for the source selection decision. When award is made on a best value basis, the SSA should make a specific determination that the superiority of the higher priced proposal warrants the additional cost involved; and

c. Direction to accomplish award of a contract.

**NOTES:**

(1) It should be noted that this is a releasable document under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

(2) An example of the format of a Source Selection Decision Document is at Attachment 9. The attachment provides a format only. The actual decision document must include a detailed discussion of the rationale for each source selected.

**AA-317 Announcement of Source Selection Decision.**

a. When the SSA is ASAF(A) or the PDASAF(A&M), as appropriate, SAF/AQ will be responsible for:

(1) Ensuring that news releases and announcements pertaining to the source selection action are prepared and coordinated with all necessary activities;

(2) Establishing an agreed time for release of award information, in accordance with 5305.303 and in conjunction with the Office of Legislative Liaison (SAF/LL) and Office of Public Affairs (SAF/PA) to ensure that contract

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award, Congressional Announcement, and Public Announcement occur at the same time; and

(3) Notifying the contracting activity of the time for award of the contract.

b. When the ASAF(A) has delegated source selection authority, the SSA shall ensure that:

(1) Advance information of the decision is provided as may be required in the delegation of source selection authority;

(2) Information needed for Congressional Announcement is provided to SAF/LLP at the preestablished time (see 5305.303); and

(3) Information needed for press releases is provided to the local Office of Public Affairs at the preestablished time.

**AA-318 Notification and Debriefings.**

a. Notifications. The Contracting Officer shall notify unsuccessful offerors in accordance with FAR 15.1001.

b. Debriefings. Debriefings shall be conducted in accordance with FAR 15.1003. Comparisons shall not be made to other offerors' proposals:

(1) Debriefings will be with only one offeror at a time and will not be conducted until after contract award;

(2) The debriefing shall be confined to a discussion of the offeror's proposal, its strong and weak points in relation to the requirements of the solicitation and government risk assessments;

(3) Debriefings will be conducted promptly and frankly. When discussions were held, any weaknesses discussed during the debriefing should have already been discussed with the offeror in the form of a CR or a DR with the exception of weaknesses identified as a result of the BAFO response. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the debriefing should parallel those identified and documented by the SSEB, SSAC, and PRAG (if used);

(4) Debriefings can be conducted orally (either face-to-face or by telephone) or in writing. A formal briefing (charts and script) will be prepared, coordinated with legal counsel, contracting staff, and approval by the SSEB chairperson. A copy of the briefing charts and script will be provided to the offeror on request. The offeror should be encouraged to submit written questions in advance. If writ-

ten questions are received, every effort should be made to either incorporate answers into the debriefing charts and script or provide written answers at the time of the debriefings;

(5) The contracting officer shall chair the debriefing session. The individuals actually responsible for the evaluations, such as the SSEB chairperson and evaluators shall provide the specific evaluation results. Open discussions are permitted on any aspect of the debriefings, including answers to written questions. Discussions regarding the validity of either the requirement or the evaluation process shall be avoided;

(6) Offerors may ask oral questions during debriefings in addition to written questions submitted prior to the debriefing. Government personnel shall attempt to answer all questions. However, the debriefing team should caucus before providing answers to any questions not provided in advance which are complex, unclear, or may potentially lead to the release of proprietary or classified information. All answers provided must be consistent with the information presented to the SSA and correspond to the areas evaluated during source selection. Occasionally, it may be necessary to provide the offeror with a written response after the debriefing. A written record of the debriefing presentation shall be made part of the official source selection file. A written summary of all questions and answers shall also be retained in the source selection file, and may be provided to the offeror; and

(7) A written debriefing may be conducted by providing the unsuccessful offeror with copies of the source selection decision document and those portions of the SSAC Analysis Report that relate to the offeror's proposal. The contracting officer may then permit the offeror to submit written questions. When written questions are permitted, they shall be answered promptly.

**AA-319 Lessons Learned.** Following contract award, the Program Office shall determine if publishing a Lessons Learned report would benefit the source selection process. These reports should contain no source selection or proprietary information, no reference to the specific program involved, and be limited to pertinent issues that may be beneficial to future source selection actions and planning. The report (if prepared) should be provided to SAF/AQCS through the MAJCOM within 8 weeks after the source selection decision is announced.

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**Part 4 - SOURCE SELECTION DOCUMENTATION AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

**AA-401 General.** This part provides guidance on the treatment of source selection documentation and the release of source selection information.

a. FAR section 3.104, Procurement Integrity, implements section 27 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act (41 U.S.C. 423) as amended by subsequent National Defense Authorization Acts.

b. FAR subpart 4.8 prescribes requirements for establishing, maintaining, and disposing of contract files, including source selection related documentation.

c. DoDD 5500.7, Standards of Conduct, sets forth standards of conduct for Air Force personnel, including circumstances relating to business relationships.

**AA-402 Source Selection Records.**

a. Source selection records include source selection information, as defined at FAR 3.104, and other documents that have a direct relationship to the source selection. Source selection information must be protected and appropriately marked in accordance with FAR 3.104. Instructions for protecting source selection information are provided in paragraph AA-403, below. Source selection records include, but are not limited to, the following documents:

(1) Program Management Directive, when it contains directives pertinent to source selection;

(2) Acquisition Strategy Panel presentations (view graphs and text) and minutes;

(3) Source list screening criteria and the results of the screening, including justification(s) for not issuing a solicitation to specific sources;

(4) The approved Source Selection Plan;

(5) SSA delegation request and SSAC Chairperson nomination request;

(6) The Source Selection Plan approval document;

(7) Evaluation criteria (as contained in the RFP);

\*(8) Numerical weights assigned to the evaluation criteria (if used) and evaluation standards;

(9) All orders or other documentation formally estab-

lishing SSAC and SSEB members, and amendments thereto;

(10) Messages and other notices notifying SSAC and other source selection personnel of meetings;

(11) Record of attendance and a summary of proceedings of any preproposal conference;

(12) Request for Proposal;

\*(13) All proposals and amendments or alternative proposals submitted by each offeror, including a summary of any oral presentation made directly to the SSEB and/or SSAC;

\*(14) Evaluation reports including Narrative Assessments, Independent Cost Analysis (ICA) used in the evaluation and any Most Probable Cost (MPC) data;

\*(15) Deficiency Reports, Clarification Requests, and offerors' responses;

\*(16) Any correspondence sent to offerors by the SSEB during the evaluation, and responses thereto;

\*(17) Company specific past performance information (e.g., CPARs);

(18) All performance data and documentation used to arrive at performance risk assessment;

\*(19) The SSEB Evaluation Report;

\*(20) The SSAC Analysis Report;

\*(21) All source selection presentations (viewgraphs and text);

(22) Source Selection Decision Document;

(23) Lessons learned report;

(24) Records of attendance at source selection decision briefings;

(25) Schedules of source selection meetings; and

(26) Source Selection Information Briefing Certificates (see Attachment 11).

\* Normally will require continued protection after contract award.

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b. The establishment of source selection records does not eliminate the requirements for maintaining official contract files required by FAR Subpart 4.8. It is always necessary to protect source selection sensitive records to prevent unauthorized access or release to the public. Because there are separate tables and rules for each category in AFI 37-122, Air Force Records Management Program, the location of all documents shall be noted by use of a cross-reference index in the official contract file.

**AA-403 Protecting Source Selection Records.**

a. In order to maintain the effectiveness and integrity of the source selection process, all information related to the source selection must be handled with the utmost discretion to avoid any compromise.

b. While the source selection is in process, disclosure of source selection information is the exclusive responsibility of the SSA and the contracting officer (see FAR 3.104). After contract award, this authority is vested in SAF/AQC, or the responsible PEO, DAC, or activity Commander for the specific contract or records involved. The responsible official may delegate authority to grant access; but, authority to release source selection information is nondelegable. Requests for access to or release of source selection information and the authorizations granting access or release must be in writing.

(1) Access is defined as receiving a source selection record or the information in a source selection record, or being permitted to view a source selection record; if the record is not physically retained by the requester.

(2) Release is defined as permitting a copy of a source selection document to be physically retained by the requester.

c. In addition to the marking requirements of FAR 3.104, source selection information must also be protected and marked "For Official Use Only (FOUO)". The cover sheet format in Attachment 10 may be reproduced and used as appropriate. The coversheet should be printed on yellow paper when available. Classified source selection documents must also be marked and protected as required by DODI 5200.1-R/AFPD 31-4, Information Security Program.

d. All persons involved in the source selection process (including non-government advisors and administrative personnel) will be required to execute a "Source Selection Information Briefing Certificate" before they are given access to source selection information. The SSAC chairperson shall ensure that the certificates from all source selec-

tion team members, including SSAC members, are collected and filed with the source selection records. (See Attachment 11 for the certificate format.)

(1) Only individuals who have a strict need-to-know and have signed the proper certification may have access to source selection information. Need-to-know must be clearly established before any individual or activity is afforded access to or release of source selection information while the source selection is in process or for a specific record after contract award.

(2) Under no circumstance will any advisor or member of the SSAC, SSEB, or any other person having access to source selection information discuss the proceedings with any individual not a member of the source selection organization, except as authorized under this appendix.

(3) Any unauthorized disclosure or release of source selection information will be investigated and, as appropriate, treated under disciplinary procedures authorized by law or administrative procedures.

e. Access to source selection sensitive information must be strictly controlled at all organizational levels. Access does not automatically extend to other individuals in the organizational chain of command of the individuals who are involved in the source selection.

(1) If the SSA desires to provide information to persons at higher organizational levels, each of those individuals must complete the certificate (see Attachment 11) and send it to the Contracting Officer to include in the source selection records.

(2) At the MAJCOM level, the MAJCOM Chief of Contracting is responsible for controlling access to source selection information.

(3) Access control at the Secretariat and HQ USAF is the responsibility of SAF/AQCS. Each Secretariat and HQ USAF office involved in the source selection will designate one individual and alternate to participate on the SSAC and to review and handle the source selection documentation for a specific acquisition. This designation must be in writing.

f. Even when source selection information falls within the categories of materials that may be withheld from public disclosure (for example an SSAC or SSEB evaluation report), each document or portion thereof must have an independent basis for exemption.

(1) Any questions regarding public disclosure of infor-



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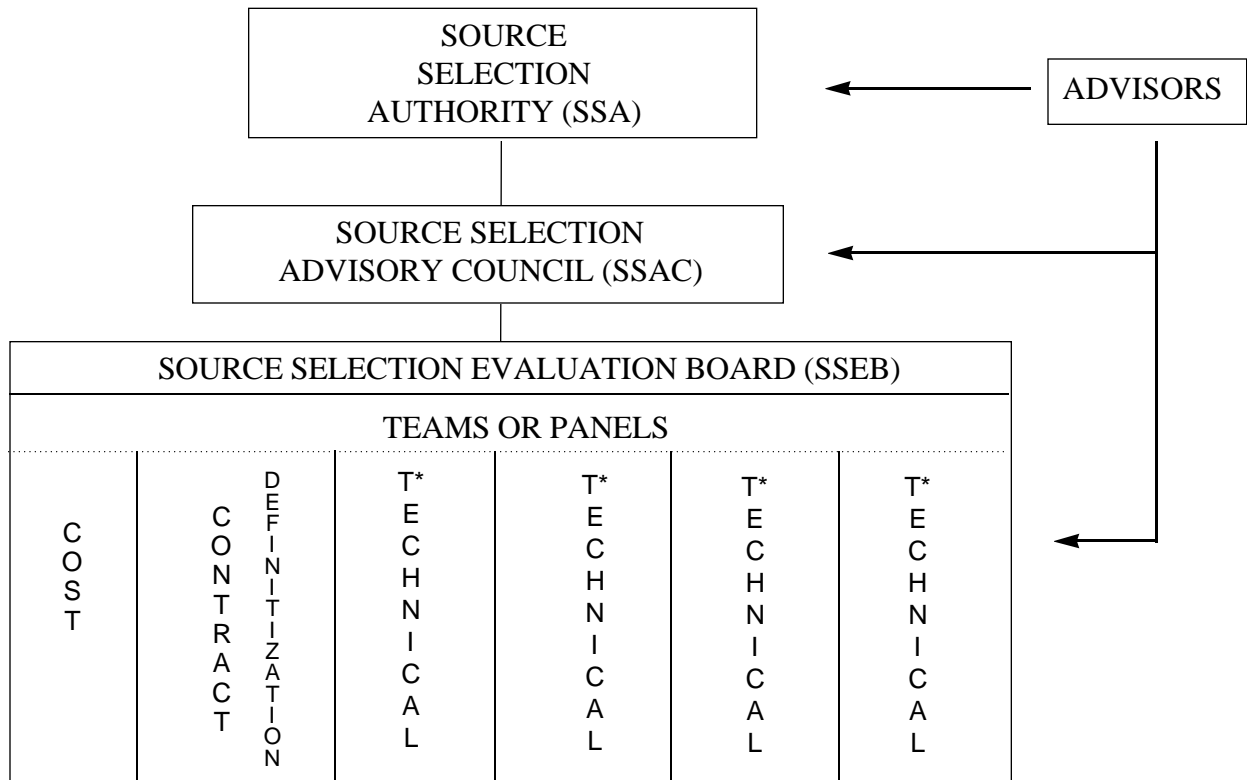
mation should be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be referred to the appropriate Freedom of Information Act advisors.

(2) Documents that would otherwise be exempt from disclosure may be subject to disclosure when incorporated by reference in a nonexempt document (i.e., when a source selection document is incorporated by reference in the resulting contract). Such data normally is releasable following contract award unless there is a compelling reason to deny release (i.e. if it contains classified information).

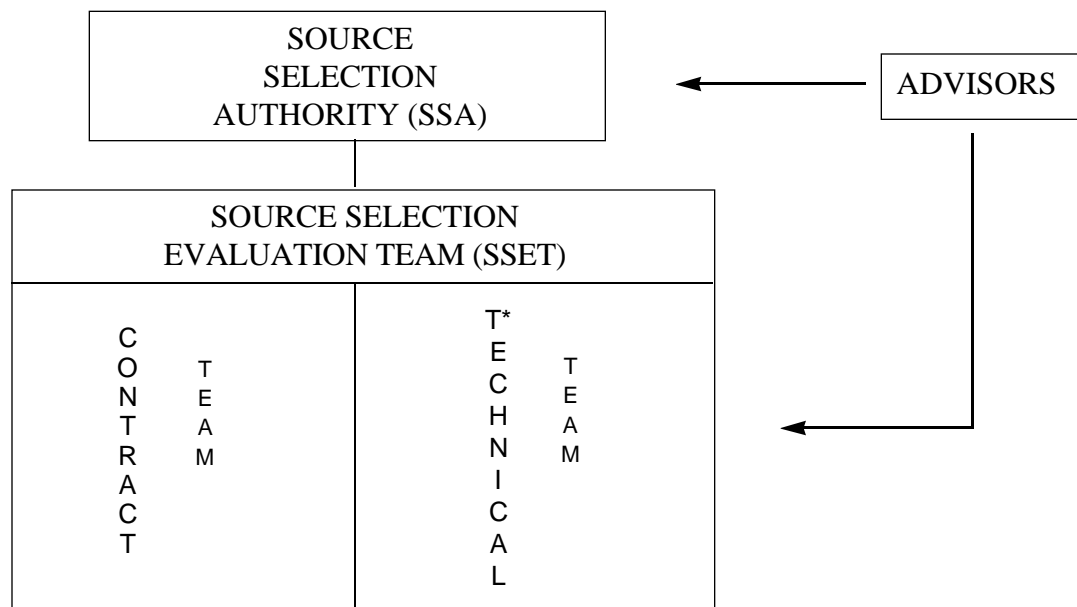
g. When a protest, before or after contract award, has been lodged to the General Accounting Office (GAO), General Services Board of Contract Appeals (GSBCA), or other level in which the Secretariat or HQ USAF is involved, any and all pertinent source selection documents shall be forwarded to SAF/AQCX in accordance with Subpart 5333.1.

h. Requests for source selection information by Congress or the General Accounting Office (GAO) will be processed under AFPD 90-21/AFI 90-201, Air Force Relations With Congress, and AFI 65-401, Air Force Relations with General Accounting Office (GAO). These activities must be informed of the restriction against public disclosure of confidential or proprietary information provided by officers. DOD and Air Force activities, such as the Inspector General (IG), auditor, and other specially appointed activities must also obtain written authority for access or release in accordance with this appendix.

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**SOURCE SELECTION ORGANIZATION****PRIMARY ORGANIZATION EXAMPLE:****ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATION EXAMPLE:**

(OPTIONAL IF NO SECRETARIAT REPRESENTATIVES ARE DESIGNATED FOR MEMBERSHIP ON SSAC)



\*"TECHNICAL" refers to teams or panels necessary to evaluate the proposal using specific criteria other than cost (price) or contract definitization. Examples might be Engineering, Logistics, Management, Testing, etc.

### **Regulatory References**

AFR 12-50 Volume I	Disposition of Air Force Documentation—Policies, Procedures, and Responsibilities
AFPD 31-4	Information Security Program
AFPD 90-21/AFI 90-201	Air Force Relations with Congress
AFI 37-122	Air Force Records Management Program
AFI 37-131	Air Force Freedom of Information Program
AFI 65-401	Air Force Relations with GAO
AFI 65-402	Air Force Relations with the Office of the Assistant Inspector General for Auditing and Auditing Follow-up, DoD
AF Pamphlet 70-1	Dos and Don'ts of Air Force-Industry Relations
DODD 5000.1	Defense Acquisition
DODD 5000.2	Defense Acquisition Management Policies and Procedures
AF Sup to DODI 5000.2	
DODD 5400.7&	
DODD 5400.7-R	DoD Freedom of Information Act Program
DODD 5500.7	Standards of Conduct

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**Secretariat and HQ USAF  
Representatives for Acquisition Strategy Panels**

<u>Organization Title</u>	<u>Office Symbol</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Deputy Assistant Secretary (Management Policy and Program Integration)	SAF/AQX	703-697-9494
Deputy Assistant Secretary (Contracting)	SAF/AQC	703-695-6332
Deputy Assistant Secretary (Cost and Economics)	SAF/FMC	703-697-5311
Assistant General Counsel for Acquisition	SAF/GCQ	703-697-3900
Deputy Assistant Secretary (Communications Computers and Support Systems)	SAF/AQK	703-697-3624
Directorate of Space Programs	SAF/AQS	703-695-1904
Deputy Assistant Secretary (Space Plans and Policy)	SAF/SX	703-693-5799
Deputy Chief of Staff, Command, Control, Communications and Computers	AF/SC	703-695-6324
Directorate of Fighter, C2, and Weapons Programs	SAF/AQP	703-695-2147
Directorate of Electronic and Special Programs	SAF/AQL	703-695-1256
Directorate of Long Range Power Projection, SOF, Airlift and Training Programs	SAF/AQQ	703-695-3020
Directorate of Science and Technology	SAF/AQT	703-746-8899

**SCHEDULE OF SOURCE SELECTION EVENTS**

The following list of events are those which usually occur during a source selection. As a minimum, the Source Selection Plan must include a schedule of those events marked \*. The cumulative elapsed time will be indicated at each of the events.

1. The Program Office develops the proposed acquisition strategy.

2. Acquisition Strategy Panel (ASP) convened; SSA delegation is discussed.

3. The Contracting Officer places a synopsis in the Commerce Business Daily.

4. SSA delegation request is sent by the PEO/DAC or MAJCOM Commander to SAF/AQCS for staffing. If delegation is not recommended by the ASP, the SSAC Chairperson nomination is sent through the same channels. The Secretariat reply to either request will designate HQ USAF and Secretariat SSAC members and the SAF/AQCS focal point.

5. The Program Office conducts early industry involvement efforts.

6. The Program Office prepares a Source Selection Plan.

7. The Source Selection Plan is submitted to the SSA.

8\*. The SSA approves the Source Selection Plan.

9. The Contracting Officer coordinates preparation of the solicitation.

10. The Program Office establishes evaluation standards for SSAC approval.

11. The Solicitation Review Panel reviews the solicitation.

12\*. SSAC is formally established and convened to:

- Designate the chairperson and approve membership of the SSEB;

- Establish evaluation criteria weights, if used; and

13 Solicitation release (But see 5301.9006-9).

14. The Program Office provides a preproposal briefing to prospective offerors, if applicable.

15\*. Proposals received— evaluation starts.

16. Oral presentations by offerors (Optional).

17\*. Initial evaluations completed.

18\*. Competitive range determination and SSEB initial evaluation briefing provided to SSAC members and SSAC meeting with SSA.

19\*. Release of Deficiency Reports and Clarification Requests and start of discussions.

20\*. Discussions completed.

21. Business clearance, legal review, and request for BAFO released.

22\*. Receipt and evaluation of Best and Final Offers (BAFOs).

23\*. SSEB (or SSET) Evaluation Report and briefings to SSAC.

24. SSAC Analysis Report completed.

25. SSAC briefing given to SSA.

26. Applicable briefings given by SSAC.

27. SSA decision.

28. SSA Decision Document completed.

29. Execution of contracts by the Contracting Officer.

30. SSA announces award, including the following simultaneous actions:

- Congressional Announcement;

- Public Announcement; and

- Contract Award.

31. Debriefings to offerors, upon their request.

32. Lessons Learned report (if prepared) submitted to SAF/AQCS.

EXAMPLE OF EVALUATION MATRIX

FACTORS

Technical Factor 1	Management	Other Specific Considerations
G	G	▲
M	M	H
L*	H*	M*

SUBFACTORS (SF)

SF 1	SF 2	SF 3	SF 1	SF 2	SF 3
G	G	B	G	Y	▲ Y
M	L	L	M	M	M
L*	M*	L*	L*	M*	M*

KEY: PROPOSAL RATING (Color Rating)

PROPOSAL RISK (Low, Moderate, High)

PERFORMANCE RISK  
(Low, Moderate, High, N/A)

- 1. Assessment criteria are used with evaluation standards to assign color ratings and proposal/performance risks.
- 2. If one subfactor is displayed, all subfactors within the factor should be displayed.
- 3. A set of double arrows indicates movement of ratings through two color or risk ranges (e.g., Y → B & L → H).
- 4. Abbreviations: R=Red, Y=Yellow, G=Green, B=Blue, H=High Risk, M=Moderate Risk, L=Low Risk, N/A=Not Applicable.
- \* Means that the block is not shown when performance risk is used as a general consideration.

### Examples of Evaluation Standards

#### (1) EXAMPLE OF QUANTITATIVE STANDARD

**AREA:** TECHNICAL

**FACTOR:** OPERATIONAL UTILITY

**SUBFACTOR:** MISSION PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

**ELEMENT:** PAYLOAD/RANGE

DESCRIPTION:

This element is defined as the payload that can be carried, considering the basic design gross weight, in a given range, when operational utilization of the aircraft is considered (Load Factor 2.5).

STANDARD:

At a weight not exceeding the basic design gross weight, the aircraft is capable of transporting a payload of:

- a. 30,000 lbs. over a 2800 nm distance; and
- b. 48,000 lbs. over a 1400 nm distance;

#### (2) EXAMPLE OF QUALITATIVE STANDARD

**AREA:** TECHNICAL

**FACTOR:** SYSTEM INTEGRATION

**SUBFACTOR:** SYSTEM SAFETY

DESCRIPTION:

The proposed system safety program will be evaluated for adequacy in effecting the design of changes or modifications to the baseline system to achieve special safety objectives. The evaluation will consider the specific tasks, procedures, criteria, and techniques the contractor proposes to use in the system safety program.

STANDARD:

The standard is met when the proposal:

- a. Defines the scope of the system safety effort and supports the stated safety objectives;
- b. Defines the qualitative analysis techniques proposed for identifying hazards to the depth required; and
- c. Describes procedures by which engineering drawings, specifications, test plans, procedures, test data, and results will be reviewed at appropriate intervals to ensure safety requirements are specified and followed.



**FORMAT FOR PREPARING DEFICIENCY REPORTS OR  
CLARIFICATION REQUESTS**

DEFICIENCY REPORT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

OFFEROR \_\_\_\_\_

AREA \_\_\_\_\_ FACTOR \_\_\_\_\_

SUBFACTOR \_\_\_\_\_ ELEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Deficiency:

State the nature of the deficiency. Include a reference to the offeror's document, paragraph and page where the deficiency is located.

Summary of the Effect of the Deficiency:

State how the uncorrected deficiency would affect the program if it were accepted "as is."

Reference:

Indicate the references that adequately substantiate that the data evaluated are deficient. These may be requirements in the solicitation, statement of work, specifications, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area Captain

\_\_\_\_\_  
Evaluator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Area and Factor

Note: When using this format for Clarification Requests, substitute "clarification request" for "deficiency report" and in the body of the request provide:

- (1) A clear description of the portion of the proposal needing clarification;
- (2) An explanation of how the proposal is either inadequate for evaluation purposes or contains contradictory information;
- (3) A statement as to whether the clarification is significant or minor; and
- (4) An explanation of the potential impacts on evaluation ratings and risk assessments. (See paragraph AA-307).

## SSAC ANALYSIS REPORT

**I. INTRODUCTION.** The following shall be included:

- a. The authority for the source selection action;
- b. Data pertaining to the Source Selection Plan, its date of approval, who prepared the plan, etc;
- c. Basis for award and evaluation criteria;
- d. The composition of the SSAC, with the lists of commands and organizations with members participating on the SSAC;
- e. The composition of the SSEB identified by functional specialties and by organization;
- f. Discussion of the requirements set forth in the solicitation, including salient points and a listing of the sources to whom the solicitation was provided; and
- g. Identification of the offerors who responded and those included in the competitive range.

**II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS.** This section shall contain a brief summary description of the proposals submitted by each offeror within the competitive range. No judgments or comparisons as to the quality, rating or ranking of proposals will appear in this section.

**III. COMPARATIVE TECHNICAL AND RISK ANALYSIS.** This section shall assess specific criteria against the evaluation standards and include the following:

- a. A comparative analysis of the proposals within the competitive range. The analysis shall identify strengths and weaknesses, risks, and ratings by area, and any significant factors other than cost that were evaluated. For each area, a list of the factors evaluated should be discussed, first individually and then comparatively. The major strengths, weaknesses, risks and ratings shall be included for each proposal. If a strength, weakness, or risk appears in one proposal and is noteworthy, the analysis shall address that aspect, or a comparable aspect, of all proposals; and
- b. A discussion of the overall impact of significant risks associated with each proposal within the competitive range including:

- 1. Technical risks inherent in the offeror's proposal;
- 2. Schedule risk as assessed against the technical approach and the prevailing economic environment (for

example, material shortages);

3. Confidence that can be placed in the cost (price) estimate provided by each offeror taking into consideration technical and schedule risk;

4. The financial risk to each offeror in relation to the type of contract and task involved;

5. Production risks relating to make-or-buy decisions, anticipated new manufacturing technologies, availability of production facilities, and overall production competence;

6. Design trade-offs proposed by the offerors and their potential impact on costs, schedule, technical and overall risk; and

7. An assessment of the contractor's past performance as it relates to proposal and performance risks identified in the evaluation.

**IV. COMPARATIVE COST ANALYSIS.** The reasonableness, realism, and completeness of each contractor's cost proposal shall be discussed. This section includes data pertaining to cost (price) analysis, Independent Cost Analysis, estimates related to total cost to the government, Most Probable Cost, the impacts of technical uncertainty on cost (price), Life Cycle Cost, and other appropriate cost (price) considerations. A summary track of costs from initial proposal through BAFO will be provided. Confidence that can be placed in the cost (price) estimate and financial risks shall also be explained.

**V. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.**

a. Contractual Considerations. Discuss significant contractual arrangements with each offeror in the competitive range and any significant difference between offerors.

b. Other evaluated general considerations.

**VI. SSAC FINDINGS.** Provide a comparative analysis, expressed in brief statements, of the issues considered by the SSAC to be significant to the decision. If requested by the SSA, a recommendation will be included.

**SIGNATURE PAGE.** A page bearing the signature of the Chairperson and members of the SSAC.

**ATTACHMENT.** The SSEB Evaluation Report shall be attached to the SSAC Analysis Report.

**EXAMPLE OF FORMAT FOR SOURCE SELECTION DECISION DOCUMENT**

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

SOURCE SELECTION DECISIONFOR THE *(Name of System)*

RFP No. \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuant to AFFARS Appendix AA and as the Source Selection Authority for this acquisition, I have determined the *(Name of System)* proposed by *(Successful Offeror)* provides the best overall value to satisfy Air Force needs. This selection was made based upon criteria established in Section M of the Request for Proposal (RFP), "Evaluation Factors for Award," and my integrated assessment of the proposals submitted in response to the RFP, the terms and conditions agreed upon during negotiations, and the capability of *(Successful Offeror)* to fulfill the subject requirement.

The six evaluation criteria against which the potential sources were measured, in order of importance, were (1) Operational Utility; (2) Readiness and Support; (3) Life Cycle Cost; (4) Design Approach; (5) Manufacturing Program and Management; and (6) Past Performance.

While all proposals in the competitive range for the *(name)* system are adequate when measured against the above criteria, the *(Successful Offeror's)* proposal offers significant operational utility and clearly provides the best system in terms of operational effectiveness. *(Successful Offeror's)* proposal is superior in terms of operational effectiveness, in part, because of its excellent instrument arrangement, which includes a logically designed and uncluttered instrument panel, in addition to excellent access to all controls. *(Successful Offeror's)* proposal displayed outstanding consideration for operational supportability by building a full-scale mockup to refine reliability and maintainability concepts. The system has the strongest characteristics in the area of reliability, maintainability, and availability. The design is also the best, meeting or exceeding all RFP requirements. It is exceptional for crew station, escape system, and avionics design. The design substantially enhances its reliability and maintainability. *(Successful Offeror's)* manufacturing approach to the *(Name of System)* clearly makes it the leader in this area. Its team of managers and employees, coupled with existing facilities, assure development and fielding of a quality system. *(Successful Offeror)* has an excellent track record on similar programs of the same complexity.

Although the most probable total life cycle cost of *(Successful Offeror's)* system is not the lowest, it is only *(XX)* percent more than the lowest total life cycle cost and offer the lowest evaluated operating support cost. It is my view that the small difference in total life cycle cost is more than offset by the superior characteristics of *(Successful Offeror's)* system.

In summary, based on my assessment of all proposals in accordance with the specified evaluation criteria, it is my decision that *(Successful Offeror's)* proposed system offers the best overall value.

(Source Selection Authority Signature and Signature Block)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Notes:

1. Each decision document must be written to describe the specific rationale for the source selected.
2. Ensure that the decision document adequately addresses the impact of the past performance assessment.

**SOURCE SELECTION  
INFORMATION**

**THIS IS A COVER SHEET  
DO NOT DEFACE**

**ONLY INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE EXECUTED  
A SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION BRIEFING CERTIFICATE  
FOR THE SOURCE SELECTION ASSOCIATED WITH  
THE ATTACHED DOCUMENT(S) MAY HAVE ACCESS TO THE  
SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION CONTAINED THEREIN**

**RETURN TO:**\_\_\_\_\_

**SOURCE SELECTION INFORMATION**

**SAFEGUARD AT ALL TIMES**

## Appendix AA--FORMAL SOURCE SELECTION FOR MAJOR ACQUISITIONS

**Source Selection Information Briefing Certificate**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Source Selection:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Briefing Acknowledgment**

1. I acknowledge I have been assigned to the source selection indicated above. I am aware that unauthorized disclosure of source selection or proprietary information could damage the integrity of this procurement and that the transmission or revelation of such information to unauthorized persons could subject me to prosecution under the Procurement Integrity Laws or under other applicable laws.

2. I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will not divulge, publish, or reveal by word, conduct or any other means, such information or knowledge, except as necessary to do so in the performance of my official duties related to this source selection and in accordance with the laws of the United States, unless specifically authorized in writing in each and every case by a duly authorized representative of the United States Government. I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion and in the absence of duress.

3. I acknowledge that the information I receive will be given only to persons specifically granted access to the source selection information and may not be further divulged without specific prior written approval from an authorized individual.

4. If, at any time during the source selection process, my participation might result in a real, apparent, possible, or potential conflict of interest, I will immediately report the circumstances to the Source Selection Authority.

5. All personnel are requested to check the applicable block:

☐ I have submitted a current SF Form 450, Executive Branch Personnel Confidential Financial Disclosure Report, or SF 278, Executive Personnel Financial Disclosure Report, as required by DoDD 5500.7.

☐ I will submit a SF Form 450 or SF 278 to the SSEB chairperson within 10 working days from the date of this certification.

☐ I am not required to submit a SF Form 450 or SF 278.

**SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Debriefing Certificate**

I have been debriefed orally by \_\_\_\_\_  
as to my obligation to protect all information to which I have had access during this source selection. I no longer have any material pertinent to this source selection in my possession except material that I have been authorized in writing to retain by the SSA. I will not discuss, communicate, transmit, or release any information orally, in writing, or by any other means to anyone after this date unless specifically authorized to do so by a duly authorized representative of the United States Government.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Debriefed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Debriefing

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Debriefer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Debriefing

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